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CAPITOL STUFF

By TED LEWIS

Washington, May 25—President Johnson was at a private home here last Wednesday night, giving the ins and outs of why he acted as he did in the Dominican Republic crisis.

While Johnson was doing a little "shop-talk" relaxing, the phone rang. The call was for the President. On the line was FBI Chief J. Edgar Hoover, to report that Col. Rafael Fernandez Dominguez had been killed in Santo Domingo.

This was the first word to reach Johnson concerning the death of Fernandez, one of the leaders of the rebel cause. Fernandez had been caught in a crossfire and shot by marines. The President is said to have reported this information to his host and other guests and remarked: "I've got the FBI investigating the Communist involvement down there."

Out of this solitary overheard phone call there has now developed the biggest outflow of flotsam and jetsam concerning our secret intelligence operations since the disclosures of spy boy activities after the 1961 Bay of Pigs.

The Washington Post, for example, reported today that the President has ordered "a team" of FBI agents into the Dominican Republic to investigate "the extent and nature of Communist influence in the civil war there."

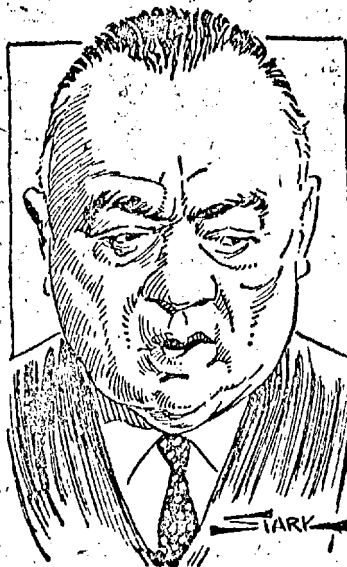
And because the President got his information on Fernandez' death from J. Edgar Hoover and not the new Central Intelligence Agency chief, Adm. William Raborn, this is supposed to show whom LBJ most relies on for key spy data.

Coincidentally, there rises the assumption that Johnson has been questioning the CIA's original appraisal concerning the seriousness of the Communist takeover of the rebel cause and wants the FBI to determine how right or wrong the CIA estimate was to begin with.

Reedy Gives an Evasive Answer

All these conjectures, which grew out of one Johnson-Hoover phone conversation, could have been stifled for good had the White House laughed them off as ridiculous.

Instead, when White House spokesman George Reedy was asked



J. Edgar Hoover
He phoned the President

if the FBI was being sent into the Dominican Republic to find out what's what, he had one of those evasive answers that have become typical under the LBJ regime.

It was to the effect that the FBI and CIA are working jointly, like they always do, "on activities that are concerned with the welfare of our own country." And any further information would have to come from the FBI. The FBI, of course, was silent, which is always most smart in any operation run by LBJ.

If the President wants the impression to remain that he is down on the CIA, up on the FBI and blames the CIA for his decision to get involved in the Dominican mess, that is his business.

But the facts need to be brought out, even if the White House won't supply the proper information. This is why: For years competing intelligence sources in the Pentagon and State Department have been whispering about a CIA-FBI feud in an effort to knock down both agencies.

FBI Operation Touches Many Countries

The FBI has been working in cooperation with the CIA on the whole Communist muddle in the Dominican Republic. There has been from the start an exchange of all information on both sides. There was no disagreement between the two agencies on the seriousness of the Red takeover threat.

The idea that the FBI has been required to limit its investigative operations to the U.S. since the CIA took over the rest of the world is not quite true either. The FBI's counterespionage activities touch on many hemispheric countries.

In some of our Latin American embassies FBI operatives function as "legal attaches." Moreover, many of the "contacts" set up by the FBI through the Americas during World War II remain valuable sources of information, which first reaches the FBI; then is passed on to the CIA.

And the CIA is also dependent on the FBI for spy data obtained in the U.S. (including Puerto Rico) in its effort to pinpoint brewing Communist revolutions south of the border.

This FBI information is often vital and conclusive. It includes tons of reports on what South American diplomats and their staff are doing on the fringes of their United Nations assignments. And intelligence information out of the Cuban exile centers like Miami concerning Castro's undercover efforts in the Dominican Republic and elsewhere.

Our Agents in Colombia and Bolivia

Both agencies need the full cooperation of each other to be effective in the complex intelligence operation of the government. The CIA, for example, has been informed that it will get full FBI cooperation from agents or undercover men already on the scene, or about to be dispatched, in the four or five South American countries where revolts are possibly imminent or already underway.

In these countries, like Colombia and Bolivia, the FBI has "experts" on whom the CIA must rely before submitting a final "evaluation" of the situation to the White House.

It is most unfortunate then, in the opinion of officials familiar with the way both agencies work, to have the White House let the idea be bootied about that FBI teams are going into the Dominican Republic because somehow, the CIA may have fallen down on the job.

Especially as this report came after some unease had developed within the CIA because of inside-the-Administration criticism of Adm. Raborn, the new intelligence chief.

Twice in the last few weeks the White House has leaked word that Raborn will be around less than a year at the most and that his successor had already been picked—Deputy CIA Chief Richard Helms.